

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

After the foregoing Amendment, Claims 20-25 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-19 have been canceled without prejudice. No new matter is introduced into the application by these amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The action rejected claims 8-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite and failing to particularly point out and distinctly claims subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. These claims have each been canceled without prejudice, rendering this rejection moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102(b)

The action rejected claims 1 and 8-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,765,782 to De Vettor. Each of these claims has been canceled without prejudice, rendering this rejection moot.

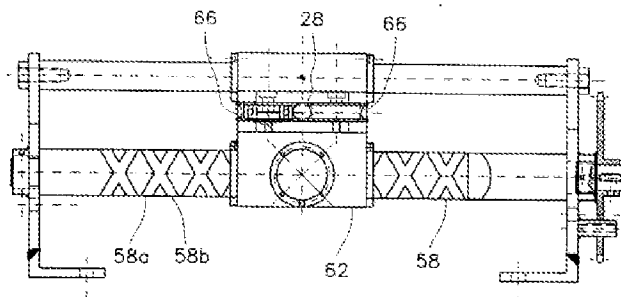
New Claims 20-25

The referenced prior art fails to disclose a module "removably mounted on the tray," as recited in new claim 20, or "removably mounted" as recited in new claim 25. De Vettor teaches a winch driven self propelled vehicle 10 comprising a winding

drum 30 for receiving winding cable 28. De Vettor never discloses that the winding drum 30 is mounted to a "removably mounted" module.

Applicant's device as claimed is advantageous over De Vettor's for use in cable-handling because it permits a single vehicle to lay multiple reels of cable when requirements arise. Such a configuration would actually be contrary to the teachings of De Vettor, because De Vettor teaches a cable and winching arrangement for driving a vehicle up a slope, and would therefore require strong connections between these components.

New claims 20 and 25 further require that the module comprises "a rolling ring drive mounted on the rotatable shaft." De Vettor's device fails to disclose this limitation.



De Vettor's device includes a cable distributor 38 for uniformly distributing the cable over the width of the drum 30, as shown in De Vettor's figure 7, above. De Vettor's cable distributor comprises a screw 58 coupled with a half crown ring 60 having an attached cable guide element 62. The screw 58 rotates along with the winding drum 30 to cause displacement of the half crown ring 60 and guide element

62 along the length of the screw 58. A rolling ring drive, on the other hand, would be understood to a person having ordinary skill in the art as comprising a plurality of rolling ring bearings telescoping a threadless shaft 129.

Applicant's rolling ring drive is advantageous over De Vettor's cable distributor for use in cable handling because it permits greater flexibility with respect to the rate of travel of the guide element 62, as De Vettor's configuration requires that "one turn of the screw 58 must correspond to each revolution of the winding drum." Col. 6, lines 41-43. As a result, De Vettor's configuration does not permit incorporation of "a pitch control for setting the length of travel of the rolling ring drive along the rotatable shaft per rotation of the shaft," as is also required by claims 1 and 12.

Claims 21-24 are dependent from claim 20, and should be patentable over the referenced prior art for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 20.

Conclusion

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this

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application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 20-25, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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